

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Scrutiny and Overview Committee  
**AUTHOR:** Scrutiny Development Officer

29 March 2012

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### WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12/13

#### Purpose

1. To update the committee on progress and outcomes of work to date.
2. To enable the committee to consider potential topics for scrutiny in 2012/13.

#### Options

3. The committee may wish to agree
  - that the draft programme at Appendix A be used as a starting point for 2012/13, subject to amendments made at this meeting
  - that an informal workshop be arranged in early June to enable the 2012/13 Committee to draft a work programme for agreement on 5 July 2012.

#### Potential Topics for Scrutiny in 2012/13

4. A framework for the Committee's 2012/13 work programme is at Appendix A.
5. A list of further potential topics is at Appendix B.
6. Further topics may be chosen from items on the Council's Forward Plan – as at <http://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPIId=293&bcr=1>.
7. A performance Health Card report can be viewed at the meeting although the data will be to 31 December 2011. An end-of-year report will be available from mid-April.
8. In choosing topics for the work programme, Members are reminded of their agreed selection criteria as at Appendix C.
9. Given the reduction in external inspection and the growing emphasis on self-regulation, the Committee may feel that it now has a greater responsibility for helping the Council to demonstrate openness and accountability.

#### Progress on past recommendations

10. Progress on the recommendations made in September to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership were due to be presented at this meeting. However, the Chairman has asked that this be delayed for two reasons. Firstly, the role of the CDRP is less prominent, and its funding less certain. Secondly, there was an all-member briefing on community safety on 7 March which provided an opportunity to discuss the issues being monitored by the Committee.
11. Once the shadow Police and Crime Panel for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is in place in June, this and other scrutiny committees will need to explore how best to discharge the ongoing statutory responsibility for scrutiny of community safety issues.

12. At the February meeting, the committee endorsed the report of the task and finish group looking at Sheltered Housing Support. This was received by the Housing Portfolio Holder later that month and he is now redesigning the service based on the recommendations.

### 13. Implications

Financial	The Committee has a discretionary budget of £5,000. Less than £2000 has been spent in 2011/12, mainly because the training programme was largely delivered in-house. It is prudent to retain sufficient funds to allow for venue hire if needed (for a call-in for example) and for external witnesses' and co-optees' expenses.
Legal	The Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to have at least one scrutiny committee. The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires that crime and disorder appears on at least one agenda each year. The Constitution states that the Committee will set its own work programme and meeting dates. The Localism Act 2011 seeks to expand the role of scrutiny and will give additional powers to summon the attendance of partner organisations.
Staffing/ capacity	The committee is supported by one scrutiny officer. Each item selected for scrutiny will require support by at least one other lead officer. Capacity for sub committee work is also dependent on the number of elected members available and willing to participate
Risk Management	The potential burden on the organisation of supporting scrutiny work must be balanced against the potential value it can add. External scrutiny carries the risk of affecting the Council's relationship or credibility with partners.
Equal Opportunities	All proposed changes to policy or services will require an Equality Impact Assessment
Involvement of Children and Young People	Children and Young People (CYP) have been invited to suggest topics and this will continue. The Committee has also agreed to involve CYP in reviews and to ensure that all reports to the committee describe CYP involvement

### Consultation

14. Cabinet, elected members, senior officers and residents, including the Council's nascent consultation panel, have been invited to suggest potential topics. Parish councils continue to be consulted during the year.
15. Ongoing consultation with nearby councils, including the county council, explores the potential for joint scrutiny activities. The chairman also attended a cross-county network meeting where officers and chairmen discussed potential topics for scrutiny work programmes in 2012/13. They intend to meet again in June.
16. Consultation will be extended to include the new Youth Council once it is in place from September 2012.

### Effect on Corporate Objectives

17. The Committee's selection criteria ensure that any topic selected for scrutiny will contribute to at least one of the Council's priorities. Scrutiny itself helps to demonstrate that this is a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.

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## Draft Work Programme 2012/13

		Portfolios
Thurs 5 July 7pm	Planning/ Historic buildings service - update Conservation area appraisals Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder Presentation	Planning
Thurs 6 Sept 7pm	Community transport Community Safety (annual duty) Learning from Feedback - update Customer Contact – update Policy & Performance Portfolio Holder Presentation	Policy & Performance
Thursday 1 Nov 5.30pm	Finance workshop	Finance
Mon 5 November 2pm	Grants Progress on corporate plan actions/performance measures Medium Term Financial Strategy Finance Portfolio Holder Presentation	Leader Finance
Thurs 10 January 2013 2pm	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder Presentation	Environmental Services
Monday 11 Feb 5.30pm	Finance workshop	Finance
Thurs 14 Feb 2pm	Corporate Priorities Medium Term Financial Strategy Leader Portfolio Holder Presentation	Leader Finance
Thurs 21 March 2pm	Sheltered Housing Support – update Housing Portfolio Holder Presentation	Housing
23 April 2013 7pm	Northstowe Portfolio Holder Presentation	Northstowe and New Communities

Dates for Portfolio Holder presentations are subject to agreement with the relevant Portfolio Holders once confirmed in post at Annual Council in May

**Joint scrutiny**

1. Health – with CCC and all Cambs DCs: ongoing. Perhaps scope for complementary work at DC level
2. PCC/PCP – with CCC, Peterborough and all Cambs DCs; Autumn
3. Cambridgeshire Future Transport t&f – with CCC and all Cambs DCs; June/July
4. LEP – with CCC, Peterborough, all Cambs DCs, Forest Heath, North Herts, Rutland, St Edmundsbury, Uttlesford and West Norfolk
5. Possibly joint DC work on CCC issues.

### Potential topics for scrutiny in 2012/13

- bus services/ transport
- community engagement
- conservation
- GP appointments: timely access
- litter in hedges
- mental health services for CYP (joint with Youth Council?)
- policy development process
- street scene
  - pavements/ street furniture/ trees
  - dog fouling/ bill posters/ litter
- traffic congestion (especially from new housing developments)

Many of the above topics have been suggested by residents. Other topics will be invited via the press and South Cambs magazine, and from the Youth Council once it is in place in September.

### PAPERS Analysis

When considering whether to adopt an item onto its agenda programme, the Committee will score the item using the following criteria:

1. **Public Interest:** the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny  
(1= low public interest, 2=medium public interest, 3=high public interest)
2. **Ability to change:** priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence  
(1= little chance of changing, 2=reasonable chance, 3=good chance)
3. **Performance:** priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well.  
(1= good performance, 2=moderate performance, 3=low performance)
4. **Extent:** priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the District.  
(1= only one ward, 2= multi-ward issue, 3 = the entire District)
5. **Replication:** work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.  
(1= already well covered, 2=already partly covered, 3=not already covered)
6. **Strategic priorities:** scrutiny work should relate to the Council's priorities and vision.

See also "*A cunning plan?*" published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, which suggests that perhaps most the most important question is "how will this work make a difference or add value?"